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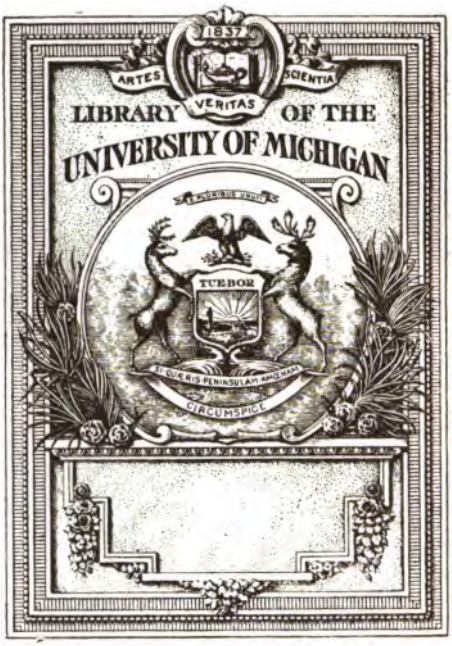
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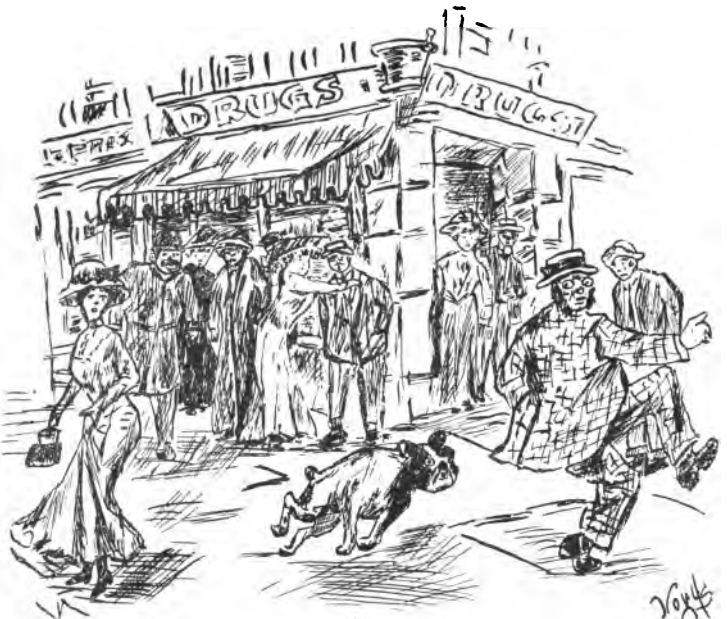


— in leaps a jackrabbit might-and'

BILLIKIN
and OTHERS

BEING A COLLECTION OF
EXPRESS STORIES

Written and Illustrated
by
GEORGE W. VORYS

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN
1910

THE ANN ARBOR PRESS

The Deadly Viverrae Mangustae

A box came into the Old Dominion Express Company office covered with a fine wire screen. Two signs on the ends of the crate bore the word "DANGEROUS" in bold characters. Inquisitive Dutch, one of the drivers for the express company flattened his nose against the wire mesh trying to peer down into the dark recesses of the box and find out the nature of the contents.

"Lizards," he ejaculated.

"Lizards, nothing," retorted Charley, the driver on Route 2. "Those are ichneumons and they are poison."

"Oh, there ain't no such thing," said Dutch.

"Charley is right," put in the agent, "we had some here before."

"Here, Dutch," said Billikin, the head driver driver for the Old Dominion Express Co. "Don't throw that sandwich in to those lizards, they don't eat such stuff."

"Well, what do they eat?" asked Dutch.

"Gold fish food," hazarded Billiken, "or anything snakes eat such as grass and toads."

"How about baled hay," said Dutch.

Charley playfully slapped at Dutch and he dodged, stumbled and fell over the crate. His heavy boots smashed the side of the crate and the ugly, slimy lizards crawled out upon the floor. The agent jumped upon the counter. Billiken and Dutch balanced themselves in the high window near and Charley stood on a trunk.

"Harold, put those things in the box," said the agent, addressing Dutch by his more genteel name in the moment of peril. "They won't hurt you," continued the boss.

"Charley did it," argued Dutch. "Let him put them in."

"Didn't either," said Charley. "It isn't my fault you have feet like shovels."

"Pick them up Charley, they are not poison," said Billikin, forgetting what the agent had said at first.

"You're closest to them, pick them up yourself."

"I'll bet Billikin can put them in the crate. That boy isn't afraid of anything," said Charley.

"You lose the bet, Charley," said Billikin, restraining the blandishment.

"Say, Dutch," went on Billikin, "you get the big one by the neck and I'll get him by the tail and we will throw him in the box."

"Nix, I got the biting end."

"Huh, well, I might get clawed."

"Pick him up, Charley, he is going to sleep," said the agent, still standing on the counter.

"Oh! no. Wait until he snores. If that thing would bite you you would swell up and die in an hour. I wouldn't touch him with the end of a fishing pole."

"Put some gloves on and pick him up," suggested Charley. "You can wear the gloves, Dutch, you have such a funny face you can throw the lizards in the box and they can't bite for laughing."

Bud, driver No. 1, entered the office with a box in his arms.

"Say, Bud, put those lizards in that box, will you?" asked Dutch.

"How much?" said Bud, recognizing an opportunity.

"I'll give you that ticket to the social."

"Done," said Bud, as he calmly picked up a wiggling lizard in each hand and dropped them in the boz.

"Those things won't bite. They're just common lizards," he said. "Us kids down in Virginia used to play with them." The box was securely nailed to prevent a repetition of the panic.

Soon after a flashy dressed man came into the office and paid and signed for the lizards. Bud took them as directed to the public square where the show tent was erected. In front of the tent was a mammoth sign displaying three men in a death struggle with a lizard. One of the men lay dying beneath a tropical palm. Another was holding his hand to a wound in his side from which the blood was freely flowing and a third was making a desperate effort to shoot the beast with a pistol and at the same time carve him with a murderous looking sword. Painted in large letters at the top of the canvas sign were the words, "The Deadly Viverrae Mangustae, the most vicious, venemous, bloodthirsty, reptiles in captivity. One touch of their poisonous fangs brings instant death." Bud looked at the sign.

"There is such a thing as a live gold brick," he soliloquised.

Fraternal Love

A crowd of colored men were standing about the depot office of the express company. All the members of the crowd were dressed in their Sunday clothes as if for some important occasion. A coon in a rusty frock coat and a boiled shirt sideled up to Charley.

"Say, boss, when does this heah train from the souf come in?"

"About ten-thirty," said Charley as he pulled a loaded truck away from the baggage car.

"Now look heah, boss," the colored man resumed, "dis heah bunch of smokes wants to git a dead niggah offen dat train. Us fellahs heah am de Rendville Aerie er airy er erie what ever she am of de Lodge 'o Colored Owls and we wants to get the body to enter it in de cemetery."

Mr. Bank, the depot agent overheard the conversation. "Just pay for the body here at the depot and sign for it and you can take it from here," he said. "That train ought to be here in a minute," he continued as he looked at his watch.

"That is No. 10, all right," said Charley as a

faint whistle was heard, "just crossing Willow road."

"Just like that nigger to come whistling 'round dat way," said an undersized coon, sporting a rubber collar.

"You, Pete Jackson, ain't you got no 'spect fo' de daid?" criticized one. "When you die nobody'll even drive de hearse. An' de lodge wouldn't turn out fo you if you would furnish de cabs."

The embarrased Pete drew down his head into his collar like a turtle and blushed as red as a guaranteed fast black skin would permit.

"What's all dis crowd of black men comin'," queried one as he craned his neck and looked down the sidewalk.

"Dat be Pete Smith and G'wage Johnsing and Henry Clay Smif un dat fuzzy header barber of "De Tonsoritus Parlors."

Pete Smith and his cohorts walked leisurely up to the station. Pete was a tall lanky coon with a brown derby hat tipped on the back of his close cropped head and gray spats showing beneath the hem of his long brown rain coat.

"Mawnin gents," said Pete as he adjusted his red cravat and speared the knot with a ponderous scarf pin.

"Mawnin, Pete, mawnin," said the lodge members in unison.

"What's dis heah bunch of yours gwin ter do, Pete, sewing circle or family reunion," queried one of the lodge members and the rest snickered.

"Aw," said Pete, "we is de Barbers' Union un we come down heah fo' to get Al Gannon's body, an being I was de president I'm gwine to see dis affair pulled off right. Nothin' am too good fo' Al."

"Y'ar?" rejoined the head of the local nest, "the lodge is gwine to bury dat yeller man."

"Nothin' doin', John," said Pete, as he waved him cooly away. "Why Al asked us to bury him and I done got de colored cornet band an blowed in fo'ty cart wheels fer flowers."

"Al's old man said we uns should bury him," interrupted an excitable member of the lodge as he shook a grimy fist surrounded by a dangling celuloid cuff at the calm and collected Pete. Pete looked at the irate crowd and said, "Cayn't dis heah bunch o' waitahs un cab drivahs un ho carriahs git it through yo' wooden haids dat I'm runnin' dis heah show? Why yo shoeshinahs, you all h'aint got money enough to hire a hack." Pete's crowd put their hands in their pocket and

tinkled the result of Saturday's toil with the comb and scissors.

The lodge members went down to one end of the platform for a consultation and Pete coached his retainers at the other end.

The train bearing the corpse puffed into the station and the Order of Colored Owls and The Colored Men's Barber Union made a simultaneous rush for the express car. In the clash several toilets were disarranged but the solitary depot policeman parted the hostile clans before the razor-drawing stage was reached.

"Now you fellows get out of here until we take this corpse around to the station," shouted the depot agent.

The crowd drew away and followed the corpse back to the office.

"Now who gets this man?" said the depot agent shortly.

"De Union am" began Pete Smith when he was drown by a chorus of "De lodge! de lodge."

"Well," said Mr. Banks, "why not bury him together."

"We won't pull off nothin' wit' dat mob," yelled one of the loge adherents.

"Dose crooks cayn't run anything while we uns is round. Dey would steal de handles offen de coffin," replied Pete.

Mr. Banks held up his hand for silence.

This corpse is C. O. D. $85.00 and express charges $5.00, now who is the proper man to take charge ot it."

"Ninety dollars," thought Pete, doing some quick addition. He tapped Mr. Banks on the shoulder, "Jest let de lodge have de body," he whispered, "We uns don't want to break up deir 'rangements none," he added.

"How much did yo say dat bill was boss?" asked the head man of the lodge.

"Ninety dollars."

"Ninety dollahs, fo de good Lawd's sake, boss, why dad niggah livin' wasn't worth half dat much."

"Well you see," explained Mr. Bank, "the undertaker is charging you for the amount yet due on the coffin he's shipped in."

"We don't want dat coffin, you keep de coffin un give us Al."

"Ninety dollahs," remarked another coon, "is a heap o money specially all to onct."

"Take de ninety out of de lodge treasury," said another.

" 'Member, fellahs, 'member," cautioned the treasurer, "we done took dat money out fo' de big ball at de Huron Club."

"Why if dat niggah wuz alive he could come down on de train fo' fifty cents," said one.

"Cayn't you do better nor that, boss?" said the spokesman to Mr. Banks.

"No, I can't."

The lodge members drew off for a talk. After a stormy interview the spokes man approached Mr. Banks.

"Now we all am gwine to make yo a proposition. De lodge'll give you nineteen dollahs and one of de membahs will wash yo windows fo' a year."

"Can't do it," said Mr. Banks decisively. "The minimum charge on dead bodies is—"

"Don't care nothin' 'tall 'bout dat minimum, dat niggah was a little fellah an' only weighed 125 pounds an' that casket don't weigh right smart," broke in another.

"If you don't pay for him by tomorrow we'll sell the corps for charges to a medical school for dissecting purposes. Cut him us," explained Mr. Banks.

"Now looky heah, boss, we ain't goin' t' spend ninety dollahs of our good money fo dat triflin' no 'count niggah. Why he was the low downest fellah. La! La! how dat fellah did cheat at craps and pokah."

"We'll have to ship him to the medical school then," said Mr. Banks.

"Fo de last time, mistah white man will yo' take nineteen dollahs."

"No."

"Sell him den, we cayn't see ninety dollahs in dat coon."

Contrary to common superstitions Al Gannon's body did not turn over in his coffin.

The self-styled local Aerie of Rendville Colored Owls left the station. In their wake followed the Barber's Union. Pete Smith nudged G'wage Johnson, "Dem dere coons sure did do Al dirt aftah we turned de funeral ovah to 'em."

"I'm betting," said Mr. Banks to the depot policeman, "both those bunches together have never seen ninety dollars."

A Misdeal

A. B. Smalley held a wooden box tightly under his arm as he toiled up Mound St. hill to the express office. Bored in the sides of the box were holes and exery time Smalley shifted the box from one arm to the other howls and whines filtered through them. He inadvertently shifted the box up side down and a terrier and a peck of sawdust fell upon the pavement. He grabbed the dog by the scuff of the neck and put him head first into the crate for the fourth time since leaving home. Smalley carried the box in front of him then, until he reached the express office. "Give me some nails and a hammer," he demanded. Dutch handed him a hatched and several spikes. Smalley succeeded in hitting his finger and splitting one side of the box before he pronounced it secure enough to stand the handling of the freight smashers.

"Here is a pup to go to the Adrian dog show," he said. "What can you value a dog at without paying any extra charges for valuation."

"Fifty dollars" replied the clerk.

"Well this dog is worth fifty dollars then," announced Smalley. "When will he get there?"

"We are not allowed to make promises as to time of delivery," said the clerk, "but I should estimate that he will get there at eight o'clock and be delivered at ten." The clerk might have added, "If No. 10 is on time, which she has not been for a week."

"Sure I know you fellows always make prompt deliveries."

"Little joke, comic supplement story," smiled Smalley as he shoved a cigar across the counter.

"Can't smoke during office hours," answered the clerk as he lit the cigar. "This is a pretty good piece of rope," he added as he puffed. "Oh, by the way, just sign up that health statement there saying that the dog hasn't any contagious disease."

"All right," said Smalley, of course we want to be sure the box is sterilized and completely fumigated and all the germs and bacteria destroyed.

"Now," continued the clerk, "this live stock contract has to be made out in triplicate and we want you to sign your name here to each contract."

"This red tape business gets on my nerves," replied Smalley. "Don't you want to know the name of the dog's second cousin?"

"If you lose that dog, you'll have to pay me fifty dollars," replied Smalley as he walked out.

The terrier was weighed, billed and put in the west run.

"Dutch," said the clerk, "take that dog down to No. 10 and be sure and get him off. Be careful he doesn't get away. If he does you'll spend fifty dollars." And all for a pup that was valued at two dollars before he came into an express office. "It makes no difference what a dog is," said the clerk, "hound, poodle, mastiff or cur or whether he is crippled, blind or as old as the hills, when he is to be shipped he is always valued at fifty dollars. So,watch him Dutch."

Dutch grabbed the box, threw it on the wagon with the other freight and hustled for the train. He galloped his horse into the depot and backed his wagon up to the pavement. Hastily putting the box on the truck with the rest of the outgoing freight he sat down upon the shady side of the wagon and began reading the sporting notes in the Morning Blade. The crunching of teeth upon slats disturbed his reading and he looked up in time to see Smalley's fifty dollar dog running down the street in leaps that a jack rabbit might envy. Dutch gave up the chase and walked slowly back to the station thinking of the fifty dollar claim he would have to pay to

make good the loss. Then he sat down and figured how he would get his bond released that night and quit. Glumly speculating upon where he could find a new job he was aroused from his reverie by the touch of a cold damp nose against his hand. A lean yellow cur about the size of the fox terrier was standing by his side and noseing about his pockets. Dutch's glum look changed to a smile. He seized the cur and shoved him into the box lately vacated by the terrier and nailed the slats tightly down. The cur seemed to take it as a matter of course and lay contentedly down in the corner of the box and went to sleep.

The train pulled into the station and Dutch put the box along with the other express into the baggage car and received the signature for the fifty dollar dog. This released him from further responsibility. As the train pulled out he gaily waved his hand at the baggage car.

"Now let's see," soliloquised Dutch, as he summed up the situation. "One dog wasn't any heavier than the other so they can't get me on weight. The messenger didn't know the right dog and I have his signature. Dog can't be identified by any one but Smalley. Nobody saw the dog get out of the crate."

"I guess," said Dutch, "I am out of it. Any

way Smalley ought not to kick, he had only one kind of dog and there are at least nine varieties of dogs in that yellow one."

The box was delivered to the American Dog Fanciers' Association exhibition hall the next day. The manager had reveived Smalley's initiation fee and had reserved roomy quarters for the prize-winning pup. He was anxious to see the dog that Smalley declared was a world beater and he impatiently awaited the opening of the box. He was squinting his eyes to note the symmetrical proportions of a thoroughbred when the cur walked leisurely out of the box.

"What is it?" the manager finally managed to gasp.

"Little bit of everything," said an attendant.

"Looks like the yellow peril," added another.

I don't understand what Smalley means. He told me he had a registered dog. That dog has had a past but no pedigree," said the manager. "I'll just send Smalley a telegram."

Smalley received a telegram which ran: "Can't classify your dog." Brown, Mgr.

Smalley replied: "Dog won at Chicago," Smalley.

Brown somewhat nettled answered: "Only blooded dogs shown here." Brown, Mgr.

"Now what do you thing of that," exploded

Smalley, "I'll go up there and show that blockhead something."

Smalley caught the early train to Adrian. He arrived at noon and caught a street car to the exhibition hall. An attendant took him back to his dog's quarters.

He looked into the stall and then looked back with his eyes bulging. "And I haven't drunk a drop for a week," he declared solemnly. The cur, looking more neglected than ever, put his nose through the cage.

"This is not my dog," yelled Smalley.

"There is the crate he came in," said an attendant.

"Oh! I see," said Smalley, "the express company."

"I can settle this, all right," he continued and he patted his express receipt in his coat pocket.

But Smalley's terrier came back that night. Dutch explained to the agent that the dog had probably knawed his way out of the crate and when the messenger opened the car door at a small station had jumped out.

"Possibly, Dutch, but not likely," laughed the agent. "I used to be a driver myself you know."

The Tale of a Parrot

"Out of El Paso, parrot 25, for H. L. Haskins and she is route four," yelled freight caller Riley.

"Checked," snapped the check clerk as he hastily scribbled an unintelligible initial on the way bill. A big Mexican parrot in a brass cage tallied with the description and was checked in good order, as his ability to shriek American and Mexican oaths in a voice audible several blocks away was taken as an indication of good health. With the proficiency of a sailor he was juggling his maledictions so as to never repeat the same one. An admiring crowd of paper boys gathered round the cage.

"Chee, where did he learn it all," said one, "why he can beat Toughy White."

"Don't know about that," answered another, "Toughey ain't no slouch, I tell ye."

"But Toughy can only swear in English," argued the first, "and this here parrot can talk any old thing. Wish I had him."

Freight caller Riley turned over the bill tag attached to the cage.

"Listen, Bill wot this tag says," he remarked. "Guarantee—The El Paso Importing Co. guarantees that this parrot will talk fluently. The purchase price will be refunded on request if he fails to fulfill this condition. Sworn to and subscribed before me this ninth day of February, nineteen hundred and six. Edward T. Smith, Notary Public, El Paso, Tex."

"They ought to guarantee that parrot won't talk," said the check clerk. "If he goes into a good Christian family, they'll have to muzzle him. His example ought to swell the foreign mission fund."

"The El Paso Importing Co. certainly teach them a fine assortment of conversation."

"Can't say it would do for the parlor," answered Riley. "Reminds me," he continued, "of that feller Fisher, who used to sell parrots here fair time. He would go down into Mexico and buy up some old parrots cheap that the natives catch out of the jungle. These old parrots never learn to talk to amount to anything. Too old or something. He would sell them with the proviso that if they didn't talk in three months he would give back the buyer's money. He would sell them all in a week and leave town explaining the parrots were too young to talk at the time but would talk before the three months were up.

The parrots at the end of that time either died from old age or would continue to live a voiceless old age."

The parrot was taken to the uptown office to await delivery in the suburbs of the city on the following day. After getting to the office he went to sleep in spite of the driver's efforts to get him to repeat some of his choice expressions when a preacher came into the office to buy a money order. One of the drivers guffawed and said,

"Look at that pointer dog in that crate over there. He thinks that parrot is a pheasant and is pointing him."

The pointer was standing still as a statue. His nose was thrust forward and his body was tense and rigid. One foot was held suspended in the air. His cold, eager eyes were fixed upon the parrot. He held his body motionless as if he feared to flush the quarry.

"When that dog hears the parrot talk he will be undeceived. He will think that it is an express messenger on the main line when the Christmas traffic sets in," said the agent.

"Or probably," he added, "one of my drivers."

"Put some paper over that crate," said the cashier to one of the drivers, "I don't like to see

that dog imposed upon that way." Bud fixed it and the dog was able to secure a rest.

The parrot was presented for acceptance to Haskins, the consignee, the next day.

"Here is your parrot, Mr. Haskins," said Bud, handing over the cage with the paper still about it.

"Any privilege of examination?" asked Haskins, trying to peer under the paper.

"No."

"What is the C.O.D.?"

"Six dollars, expressage two twenty and charge for returning the money."

"You people are a lot of grafters," yelled Haskins, "I never had to pay that last charge before. Say, Bud, does that hit your pocket or the company's? And that shipper is no better. They make you pay an exorbitant price for an old relic. I bought some gold fish from them last month and when they were delivered they were dead. I believe the skinners sent me dead ones," said Haskins, out of breath from his long peroration.

"You'll find these charges all right," answered Bud. "You know the law allows you to look at the tariffs at the office."

"I can't make the change. I lack a dime," said Bud, forgetful of a pocketful of change.

"Keep the dime, that's all right," replied Haskins generously as he signed his name in the wrong place.

Haskins tore the paper from the cage. The parrot was lying on his back. His plumage was ruffled and his eyes stareing and glassy. His feet were sticking straight upward from his body into the air. The rigidness of the body looked suspicious to Bud and he hastily left the yard unnoticed by Haskins, who was down on his knees in front of the cage saying, "Wake up, Polly. Does Polly want a cracker?"

"Polly wants a funeral," thought Bud as he hastily drove away before Haskins could realize the reason for Polly's trance.

"Did you deliver that parrot, Bud?" said the agent as he came into the office.

"Yes, but that parrot was dead, Mr. Banks. He must have frozen to death when Dutch forgot to turn on the office fire that night."

"Come over here, Bud," said the cashier, "and settle up your acount for the day. I expect you'll have your usual shortage. That pie counter habit will ruin you yet."

After Bud had settled his sheets the cashier

said solemnly, "Bud, there is a lesson in this swearing parrot case for you. It is possible to curse yourself to death."

"Naw, Mr. Ayers, there is nothin' in that er Charley and Billikin would be dead long ago."

Lannigan's Goat

Lanigan had a goat, or rather the goat had Lanigan. Lanigan bore no love and affection for the goat and had often tried to sell, trade or give him away without success. The remarkable thing about the goat was his appetite. He relished tin-can labels and old shoes as much as the clover which grew on the commons back of Lanigan's house. Anything capable of being swallowed, he ate. On July fourth the children fed him firecrackers. One day Mrs. Lanigan incautiously left her washing hang too close to the ground. The error cost Lanigan two shirts and the sleeve of another. When Lanigan reviewed the remains the doom of the goat was sealed.

Lanigan, yanking a shaggy white goat along at the end of a strap, strode into the Old Dominion Express office. Lanigan ordered him sent to a fictitious address in a distant town. Charges were to be "collect" and Lanigan said he would guarantee payment. When notified by the express company that consignee could not be located, as would certainly happen, he intended to

refuse to receive the goat back and repudiate his oral guarantee and thus pay off a grudge he had against the company for a fancied grievance.

* * * * * * *

Mrs. Dalton was expecting a consignment of fine geranium plants from a large nursery in the east. The florist had written her that he had expressed them planted in a box with the tops exposed to insure good condition when delivered.

* * * * * * *

Fate in the form of an express messenger caused Mrs. Dalton's plants to be placed within the reach of Lanigan's goat. The goat was tethered in the express car so that he could move about within a radius of several feet. Mrs. Dalton's plants were within this radius. The red flowers first attracted his attention and he showed his approval by eating them. The leaves followed the flowers in rapid succession. For some reason he did not eat the roots but started upon the messenger's tin dinner pail, but was interrupted by being tied so close to the car that he could not wink without straining himself.

* * * * * * *

Mrs. Dalton's flowers died. Lanigan's goat was sold by the express company for the charges. He still lives in spite of his eating an occasional glass bottle.

Celery, Salary or Sea-Fish

The Kalamazoo Celery Co. Ltd. shipped a crate of celery to Greening, Ill., for a customer named Charles Fish. The train carrying the crate collided with a local freight at Bolton, Ill., and the baggage car containing the express was completely destroyed by catching fire from the wrecked engine. The celery not being delivered to consignee, Chas. Fish, in a reasonable time, he requested the local express agent to trace his shipment and see if it had been misdirected or lost. The agent at Grening reported the matter to Claim Agent Moriarty at Chicago, and he sent out inquiries to the stations along the route traveled by the celery. The stations to which the tracer letters were sent were small unimportant villages. The express company representative there was generally the keeper of the village store and post office combined, the agent of the railroad company with a possibility of his carrying insurance and real estate as a side line. Very little express matter comes to these hamlets and consequently the agents have not a very extensive knowledge of the express business. The technical terms used in correspondence sent out

by the Superintendent's and Route Agent's offices are generally not translated in accordance with the usual meanings. In replies sent, these agents, in an effort not to expose their ignorance and yet give a satisfactory reply, sometimes send in some remarkable letters.

Each one of these agents received the following communication from the Claim Agent's office:

Chicago, Ill., Oct. 2, 1907.

Agent .....

C. Fish short bx. celery, C.O.D. 3.00. W.B. 23— 10—24, Kalamazoo to Greening, Ill. Investigate and advise as to your record.

WM. MORIARTY, Claim Agent.

The sextet of country agents wrote as follows:

Electric Bow, Ind., 10-26-1907.

Claim Agt., Chicago, Ill.—I never got no salery here. This here office only pays a small commission. My family is getting bigger and if you will send me the short salery I can live like a white man and make money for the express company.

CHARLEY FOGGS, Agt.

Cut Bait, Ind., 10-27-1907.

Claim Agent, Chicago, Ill.

Dear Sir:—I have no record of any sea fish. All the fish in these parts are bull-head cats and fresh-water suckers. I caught the biggest fish ever caught hereabouts.

KING C. FISHER, Agt.
Sherlock, Ind., 10-27-1907.

Claim Agent, Chicago, Ill.

Dear Sir:—I think my predecessor got the fish you were short as I know they were eating fish at their boarding house about that date. I also found some fish bones in the garbage box. We never record transfers here.

S. HOLMES, Agt.
Harddup, Ind., 10-28-1907.

Claim Agent, Chicago, Ill.

Dear Sir:—I will return the C.O.D.'s for fish when I get the money. You can't get the money quicker by sending these dunning letters. The fish were not for C. Elery anyhow.

I. O. MUCHER,
Lonely Creek, Ill., 10-27-1907.

Claim Agent, Chicago, Ill.

Dear Sir:—I hope you don't think I got that celery. I don't eat celery neither does my wife

or mother-in-law, who lives with us. I will look out for it.

Respectfully,

P. K. Budd.

Pankhurst, Ill., 10-27-1907.

Claim Agent, Chicago, Ill.

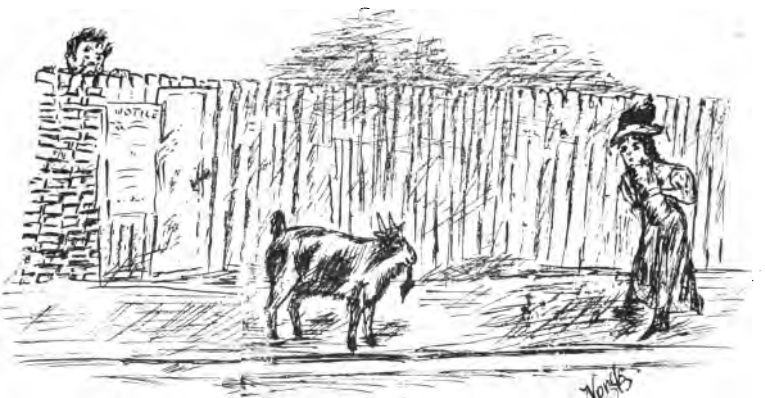
Dear Sir:—There has only two packages come into this office the past month. Old Mrs. Boggs got a wig from Chicago and Lil Appleton got a bicycle. Nothing that looks like celery.

B. J. Scroggs.

P. S.—I hope you are well.

The claim agent looked over the replies and laughed so loud that the rest of the clerks were soon peeping over their chief's shoulders at the replies.

"This man Budd at Lonely Creek," said Mr. Moriarty, "wanted to pay the route agent, for charges collected, in butter and eggs, the last time his office was settled." He then scanned the reply of the indignant Mr. Budd for the third time.



– an occasional glass bottle.

Circumstantial Evidence

"Jimminy, but that trunk is heavy," thought Bud as he hoisted a large iron bound trunk upon a truck preparatory to shipping it away, "Wonder what it has in it? Hardware samples probably or some street faker's outfit," he said to Charley.

"It looks like that old fellers who sells eight handkerchiefs for a quarter and throws in a South Carolina diamond ring," replied Charley.

"No," said Bud. "He left on No. 35 this morning. You know that old satchel he carries, Charley. Well there was a hole in it and when he went out to the train those polished glass beads, with a mirror glued on the back to make their shine, commenced to roll out the hole. I yelled to him he was losing his diamonds, but he said, ''S all right, sonny, pick them up. You can have them diamonds.'"

"He was the old feller," added Charley, "who tipped me a safety razor to get a box off for him on the six o'clock train. I about skinned myself trying to shave with it in time for Locomotive Engineers' dance down at McCarty's. It took

the beard off all right, but it took the hide off with it."

"Well, I guess I'll pull this truck of freight up along the track to get ready to load the freight on that A. & M. jerkwater limited," rejoined Bud as he lazily picked up the handle of the truck.

"No, boys, you don't need to load that trunk," interrupted a voice. Bud and Charley looked at the stranger, a short, thick-set man, who was pointing his finger at the heavy trunk.

"You see, boys," he explained, "I'll have to have a look at it first. See that," he added as he pulled back one side of his coat.

"Sure," said both, as they recognized the familiar shield.

"Whose trunk is that?" interrogated the detective. "Belongs to that Belgian glass worker. He expressed it to Coffeyville, Kansas. That iron block and set of blow pipes go with it," expounded Charley. "Is his name Jules Andreas, a big dark fellow, tan suit, and slight limp in his walk?" "Yes."

"Now, boys, take that trunk and put it on the scales and weigh it. I guess I had better satisfy your curiosity first. This Belgian Andreas brought his wife over from the old country last week. She got thick with another Belgian the

way over and Andreas found her with the other fellow. Last night down at 'The Golden Harp' Andreas swore he would kill her when she came home. The neighbors saw her come home about tewlve that night. They also heard Andreas and her quarreling. Andreas' wife has not been seen today and Andreas himself is trying to get the first train out of town. Now, if he killed the woman he couldn't bury the body because the neighbors would see him. The only thing he could do would be to put the body in the trunk. That way he can take away all evidence of the crime. So that is why I want to see what is in it. Roll it over on the scales, now," he directed Bud.

Bud gingerly tumbled it upon the scales. "One hundred eighty-five," he announced. Andreas' wife was a big woman, too.

"Better open it up. Undo those straps. I'll break the ock," the detective was ordering, when some one said.

"What you do wit ma trunks?"

"Charley, Charley, isn't that Andreas?" whispered Bud excitedly. "Think he will fight?"

"He may," answered the cautious Charley, "but I'm not going to."

"Is this your trunk?" the detective questioned Andreas.

"Yeah."

"What have you in it?"

"Mah own biz."

"Yes, and it's my own biz, too. Either open that trunk and show me what is in it or I'll open it myself."

The big Belgian turned pale. "Don't wanta," he gasped.

"Now, Andreas, I know what is in that trunk and you might as well confess. Now, is it in there?"

"Yeah."

"When did you put it in there?"

"Last night," he said as he trembled from head to foot.

"All right, Mr. Andreas, we can't be too careful with you," remarked the detective as he slipped the handcuffs over the Belgian's wrists.

"Open that trunk, young fellow," he added to Charley.

Charley obeyed, but all the while he kept a watchful eye on Andreas, who was not in a pleasant humor. Charley threw up the top of the big trunk. Everyone present peered into the trunk to see the mangled corpse, for Andreas was villainous to do the work well. Neatly piled in the trunk were dozens of pint bottles of whiskey packed in cotton batting.

"Shut that trunk," said the detective, "I'm no anti-saloon league detective and bootleggers are out of my line." He walked over to Andreas, "I'm going to leave you go this time, Andreas," he began, "but the next time I catch you we'll put you in jail for ninety-nine years."

"Tanks, much tanks," murmured Andreas.

The trunk was shipped out, much to Andreas' delight, on the same train he himself took.

"Say, Bud," said Charley some months afterward, "what ever became of Andreas' fat wife?"

"Oh," said Bud, "those Hunyocks out there in the glass works say he sold her to the other fellow for four dollars. If he had sold her by the pound he could have gone to Kansas in a special car."

Billiken, an Olden Time Express Man

[NOTE.—The character portrayed here is radically different from the present type of expressman. Express companies demand courtesy, carefulness and sobriety from their employees. Modern conditions and progressive methods of doing business will not tolerate such conduct as that displayed by this character.]

Elbert Edan Edwards, alias Billikin, had been in the service of The Great Western Express Company for five years. In this short time he had developed from an unsophisticated country yourth into an authority upon the devious and dubious methods of business practiced in our large cities. He had long ago dispensed with his conscience as an unnecessary and bothersome adjunct to possess. His dearly earned experience taught him the best method to calm the most strenuous kickers and render them docile and tame and how best to wring a tip out of a parsimonious patron. But along with this he had acquired a degree of impertinence character-

istic of some expressmen. His most valued accomplishment was the ability to shift most of his work onto his fellow employees without making them angry.

"Gee," thought Billikin, as he sorted his wagon load of freight. "If I don't hustle, I'll only get off an hour early this morning." He jerked a big trunk from his wagon and it fell on the street with a tinkle of glass. Jerking it up concrete steps he banged it down on the porch. After five minutes of valuable time had been spent trying to break the door-bell a lady came out and said, "I thought the children were playing with the bell or I would have come sooner."

"Here is a trunk for Elizabeth Jones," he said, shoving the book into her hands.

"You mean Miss Elizabeth Jones," she said severely.

"Sure, send Lizzie out."

A voice in the hall said, "Bring the trunk up in the attic, I wish to unpack it there."

"Is that all the further you want it? Hain't you got a roof garden?" growled Billikin (in contravention of Rule 19, "Drivers must treat patrons courteously and respectfully.")

A corner of the trunk scratched the hard wood floor and cut a long deep gash in the wall paper before the trunk was placed in the attic.

The progress of the trunk was accelerated by caustic comments by the lady such as, "Such service, I have never seen. Is it possible to get a trunk here in a week?" and, "I'll see the agent about this. The man who brought my trunk before carried the trunk up on his back," she said.

"That fellow who holds up an automobile on his chest down at the Hippodrome couldn't carry that trunk up there, lady, on his back," replied Billikin.

"What's the charge?" inquired the lady.

"Two dollars."

"Two dollars? This is robbery," she argued.

"Well, of course, if you can't afford to pay it and haven't the money, I'll take it back," said Billikin.

"Who said I couldn't afford to pay it?" she demanded excitedly. "I an afford it as well as anyone in this block. I guess if you knew anything about this part of town you would know I can afford it. Here is your money."

Billikin grabbed the bill, put his signed book under his arm and clattered down the steps two at a time, stopping at the bottom to make an ineffectual jab with his book at a pet poodle. He was smiling as he climbed upon the wagon.

"Here is your millinery, lady, the bill is twen-

ty-five," said Billikin, rearranging a slight box which had been crushed in transit.

"Can't I try it on?" inquired the lady.

"No, ma'am."

"But I want to see whether I like it," she objected. "Maybe that aigrette on it isn't just what I want," she supplemented.

"Can't do it."

"Well! I'll take it anyway," she said, "although I think it is an outrage."

The lady took out from the box the remnants of a hat. In transportation the top of it had been pushed through the brim and the flowers with which it was trimmed hung rakishly down the side. Before she could give relief to her feelings Billikin had disappeared. He had recognized the critical moment. If it had been Dutch, another driver, he would have stood around and said consolingly, "Kinda warped those feathers a little." "You can get another one for $2.50," or "She'll be all right when she gets dry" and other impolitic remarks tending to enrage, not to placate.

"Deacon Dodds, 1414 Trellis Place, from the Pioneer Distilling Co.," read Billikin from the top of a package. "The deacon is getting some more books," he though. The deacon met him at the gate. He was anxious to get the books he said as he had to prepare a local option lecture.

"Here are the books," whispered Billikin, "but unpack them at once because they are leaking."

"I'll take the books," said the deacon, ignoring the statement.

"What was in that package?" said the embarrassed deacon as he handed Billikin a quarter tip after signing and paying the express.

"Stoddart's Lectures," answered Billikin as he drove away.

"Are those in good order?" said the corner grocer, as he looked at a bucket of sloppy oysters and a box of butter which was set down at his door

"You certainly are getting a lot of freight, Mr. Cleve. You're one of the best customers we have. I can always tell who is doing the business by the freight they get."

"How much did Small get?" said Cleve, interested.

"Well, Small gets a lot of express, but not the amount you do."

"Those oysters look like they have been spilled," said Cleve.

"I don't think he will get well," continued Billikin.

"Who won't?" asked Cleve.

"That fellow the train ran into this morning. Just sign right here. The bill is seventy-five,"

added Billikin as he carelessly stepped in front of the broken butter box. Cleve tossed him the book and paid him seventy-five pennies. The express company's representative picked them up with bad grace and the bunch of bananas at the door suffered in consequence. Cleve turned to his clerk, "If I could get a trained tarantula to put in those bananas I'd pay well for it."

"I won't take this dress," announced the lady at 414 State. It is completely ruined. It looks like it fell in a mud puddle."

"It must have happened on the train, lady," said Billikin, volubly. "Those fellers are terribly careless," said he as he remembered a box falling from his wagon into the street.

Billikin had a box for Mrs. Ball. She was the worst kicker in the town. In fact she was in a class by herself, as Dutch expressed it. If you brought her a package prepaid she would kick because it wasn't collect. Mrs. Ball had ordered a tailored suit from Chicago to come C.O.D. from the Isaacs-Jacobs Mail Order Concern. Charley said she measured herself with a string and set away for it. Billikin took it carefully from the wagon and carried it in his arms to her door, thus obeying the edict—"Packages must not be carried by the strings."

Mrs. Ball opened the door.